

Claims

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A method of automatically activating an in-car video surveillance system in response to a collision, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a law enforcement vehicle with an accelerometer having an axis of operation oriented to cause the accelerometer to be responsive to an impact,
- (b) producing an output signal when said accelerometer senses a predetermined G force indicative of said impact,
- (c) providing an in-car video surveillance system having a video recorder and a record mode initiated in response to a record command, and
- (d) delivering said record command to said video recorder in response to said output signal, whereby the video surveillance system records the incident responsible for the impact.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step (c) includes providing said in-car video surveillance system with a history buffer responsive to said record command to transfer data in the buffer to the video recorder.

3. A method of automatically activating an in-car video surveillance system in response to a collision, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a law enforcement vehicle with a first accelerometer having an axis of operation extending generally in the front to rear direction of movement of the vehicle,
- (b) providing the vehicle with a second accelerometer having an axis of operation extending transversely of said direction of movement,
- (c) producing a first output signal when said first accelerometer senses a predetermined G force indicative of an impact,
- (d) producing a second output signal when said second accelerometer senses a predetermined G force indicative of an impact,
- (e) providing an in-car video surveillance system having a video recorder and a record mode initiated in response to a record command, and
- (f) delivering said record command to said video recorder in response to at least one of said output signals, whereby the video surveillance system records the incident responsible for the impact.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said step (e) includes providing said in-car video surveillance system with a history buffer responsive to said record command to transfer data in the buffer to the video recorder.

5. In an in-car video surveillance system:

an accelerometer having an axis of operation and adapted to be mounted in a vehicle
with said axis oriented to cause the accelerometer to be responsive to an impact,
circuitry responsive to said accelerometer for producing an output signal when said
accelerometer senses a predetermined G force indicative of said impact,
a video recorder having a record mode initiated in response to a record command, and
a controller for delivering said record command to said video recorder in response to
said output signal, whereby the video surveillance system records the incident
responsible for the impact.

6. The combination as claimed in claim 5, further comprising a history
buffer responsive to said record command for transferring data in the buffer to the video
recorder.

7. The combination as claimed in claim 5, wherein said circuitry includes a
comparator responsive to said accelerometer for delivering said output signal when an output
voltage from said accelerometer exceeds a preselected input voltage applied to the
comparator.

8. The combination as claimed in claim 7, wherein said accelerometer is an
integrated circuit containing a force sensor and means for converting the response of the
sensor to said output voltage.

9. An in-car video surveillance system for a law enforcement vehicle, automatically activated in response to a collision, said system comprising:

- an accelerometer having an axis of operation oriented to cause the accelerometer to be responsive to an impact,
- circuitry responsive to said accelerometer for producing an output signal when said accelerometer senses a predetermined G force indicative of said impact,
- a video camera for viewing a selected scene,
- a controller for producing a record command in response to said output signal, and
- a video recorder having a record mode initiated in response to said record command,

whereby the video surveillance system records the incident responsible for the impact.

10. The in-car video surveillance system as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a video recording system including said video camera, said video recorder, said controller, and a history buffer responsive to said camera for continuously receiving data therefrom, and wherein said history buffer is responsive to said record command for transferring data in the buffer to the video recorder.

11. The in-car video surveillance system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said axis of operation of the accelerometer extends generally in the front to rear direction of movement of the vehicle, and wherein said system further comprises a second accelerometer having an axis of operation extending transversely of said direction of movement, and circuitry responsive to said second accelerometer for producing a second output signal when said second accelerometer senses a predetermined G force indicative of an impact, said controller being responsive to said second output signal for delivering said record command.

12. The in-car video surveillance system as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a video recording system including said video camera, said video recorder, said controller, and a history buffer responsive to said camera for continuously receiving data therefrom, and wherein said history buffer is responsive to said record command for transferring data in the buffer to the video recorder.